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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION ON BUSH'S ADDRESS TO THE  
NATION SEPTEMBER 7, 03.

NEA/PPD FOR DMACINNES, JDAVIES, JGAFFNEY

1. SUMMARY: U.S. President George W. Bush's speech on September 7 has so far been mentioned only in one government and one opposition paper. The opposition paper, which is usually very anti-American, only published excerpts of the speech with no commentary. Only the government paper carried commentary. Most newspapers in Yemen have not yet published since the President's speech last Monday. Instead of focusing on the President's speech, press reports in general have rather focused on the 2nd anniversary of September 11 and its ramifications in the Arab region. END SUMMARY.

2. "Al-Thawra" (official daily) published excerpts of President Bush's address to the nation in its publication last Monday. The paper highlighted President Bush's call on the UN to play a wider role in Iraq, which has become a central front in the war on terrorism. On 09/09, "Al-Thawra" carried an opinion article entitled "The Babylonians' Curse." The article indicated that Bush's speech carried a confession that Iraq has turned into a difficult front for the US to face. The paper added that "President Bush is facing the curse of the Babylonians at the economic and military levels".

3. Without commenting on the speech, the typically anti-American Al-Balagh independent weekly, published excerpts of the speech highlighting the objectives of the US strategy in Iraq as stated in the President's speech as to "destroy the terrorists, enlist the support of other nations for a free Iraq and help Iraqis assume responsibility for their own defense and their own future."

4. The majority of Yemen press articles are focusing on ramifications of September 11 and continue to argue that the US anti-terror campaign launched two years ago did not achieve its objectives but rather increased anti-US sentiments in the region. The government-owned weekly, al-Wahda, once argued that "the US is targeting Arabs and Islam in general . it's creating enemies to serve its colonial interests worldwide."